

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
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March 15, 2019

The Honorable Kirstjen Nielsen  
U.S. Department of Homeland Security  
3801 Nebraska Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20528

The Honorable William Barr  
U.S. Department of Justice  
905 Pennsylvania Ave NW  
Washington, DC 20004

Commissioner Kevin K. McAleenan  
U.S. Customs and Border Protection  
1300 Pennsylvania NW

Washington, DC 20201

The Honorable Ronald D. Vitello  
Deputy Director and Senior Official  
U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
Washington, DC 20528

Acting Director Jonathan Hayes  
Office of Refugee Resettlement  
Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue S.W.  
Washington, D.C., 20201

Dear Secretary Nielsen, Attorney General Barr, Commissioner McAleenan, Deputy Director Vitello and Acting Director Hayes:

On Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup>, California Judge Sabraw ruled that the Trump administration is legally responsible for all children that were separated from their parents following the family separation policy, which includes children that were separated from June 2017 through June 2018. Though there are no firm estimates on the total number of children that were separated, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) officials have estimated that of the more than 47,000 children that were in Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) custody in that year, thousands of children could have been separated. This is in addition to the over 2,800 children that HHS was tasked with locating the parent and helping to reunify them with their child this past year.

The Congressional Hispanic Caucus has been following the issue of family separation closely and has sent a number of letters, met with HHS and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) officials and visited a number of DHS and HHS facilities to examine the conditions of these facilities and the treatment of children, parents, family members and adults in these settings.

As we have met with officials independently from several of your agencies, we have noticed that while the agencies have some answers to our questions, there is a lack of a clear, comprehensive and complete examination of how DHS, HHS and DOJ coordinated to carry out the Trump administration's family separation policy.

It is now clear that DHS and DOJ failed to properly communicate the launch of this harmful policy, DHS failed to track and identify all separated children and parents at the border, and HHS was given the arduous task of tracking and identifying as many separated children as possible.

Many questions remain on this failed and cruel policy and it now appears that given this most recent ruling, DHS and HHS will once again need to work with nonprofit groups to help locate and identify possibly thousands of additional separated children. We, therefore, request a multi-agency meeting with an official, or officials, from each of your agencies to meet with CHC members to discuss how administration officials will ensure that all separated children have been identified, and that a system is created that ensures the proper tracking and processing of all families so that a crisis like this never happens again. It is critical that we meet with the three agency officials at the same time to ensure CHC members get a full and complete understanding of this policy and the issues that remain.

Our 38-member Caucus represents millions of individuals living along the border, has been a voice for Latino and immigrant communities for decades, and has introduced legislation that addresses many issues in our broken immigration system. As such, it is imperative that our members work with you to understand the full impact of this policy, and the progress in redressing its devastating impact on asylum seeking families.

We know scheduling a multi-agency meeting can be a challenge but we look forward to working with you to schedule this important meeting. Please let us know dates and times that work in the coming weeks to allow for our members to meet with officials in your respective agencies.

Sincerely,



Joaquin Castro  
CHC Chairman



Ruben Gallego  
CHC First Vice-Chair



Nannette Diaz Barragan  
CHC Second Vice-Chair



Adriano Espaillat  
CHC Whip



Veronica Escobar  
Freshman Representative